



City of San Antonio, Texas

Development Services Department

TO: Development Services customers

SUBJECT: INFORMATION BULLETIN # 540
Portable Storage Units (Pods and Shipping Containers)

DATE: September 13, 2011, *revised April 9, 2012*

As a customer service initiative, the Development Services Department (DSD) has created this Information Bulletin (IB) to assist Department customers understand the requirements in conjunction with portable storage units as an accessory use.

Background

The City of San Antonio has permitted portable storage units in conjunction with a Portable Storage Unit Affidavit since issuance of rule interpretation decision #40 on August 31, 2005. Related provisions were added to the Unified Development Code through ordinance 2006-11-30-1333 on November 30, 2006. Since that time the staff of the Development Services Department has required furnishing of the affidavit for all portable storage units. This IB will provide updated guidelines to staff to ensure consistency with the permitting requirements of the International Building Code and International Residential Code.

Definitions

Portable storage units are containers used solely for the shipping and/or storage of materials, inventory or products and constructed in a manner to provide for structural integrity and designed to be placed directly on the ground without a foundation, have no wheels or axle and may have no utilities connected to them. The UDC classifies such storage as either shipping container or moving pods based on the following definitions:

Storage (shipping container). A unit designed for the storage and/or shipment of goods by means of boat, train or truck. Portable storage containers are self-contained units which do not have or ever had axles or wheels directly attached to them permanently or temporarily. (See figure 1)
[comment: it is recognized that axles/wheels may have been used to place the shipping container at a particular location.]

Storage (moving pods). A self contained container used for the temporary storage and/or moving of small amounts of goods such as a household's contents or office tenants contents. Moving pods are not allowed to be used as permanent on-site storage and shall only be placed on non-industrially zoned property for a maximum period of sixty (60) days. Long term storage of moving pods with or without goods is permitted in all industrial zones "L", "I-1", I-2", "MI-1" and "MI-2" zoning districts. A permit may be obtained for a longer period of time but only if the moving pod is placed behind the front of the primarily building, or if no building the front setback line and is not visible from a public street. (See figure 2)

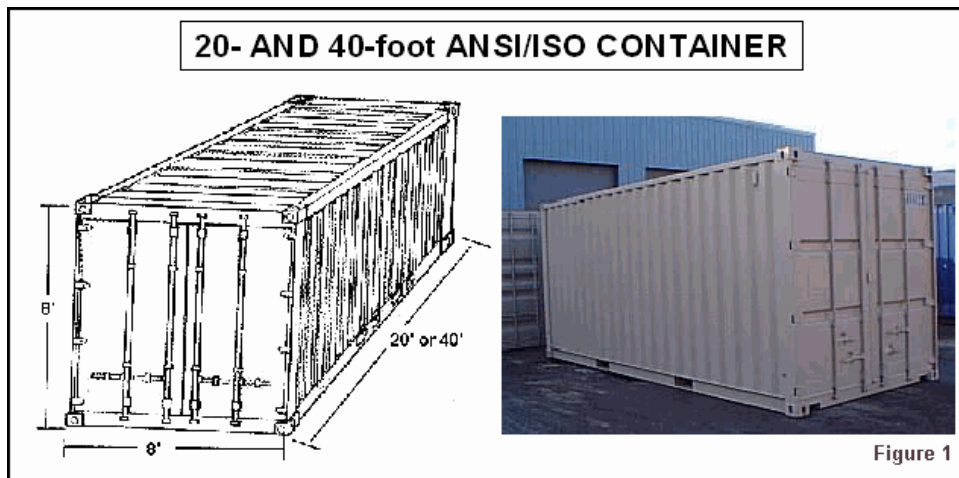


Figure 1

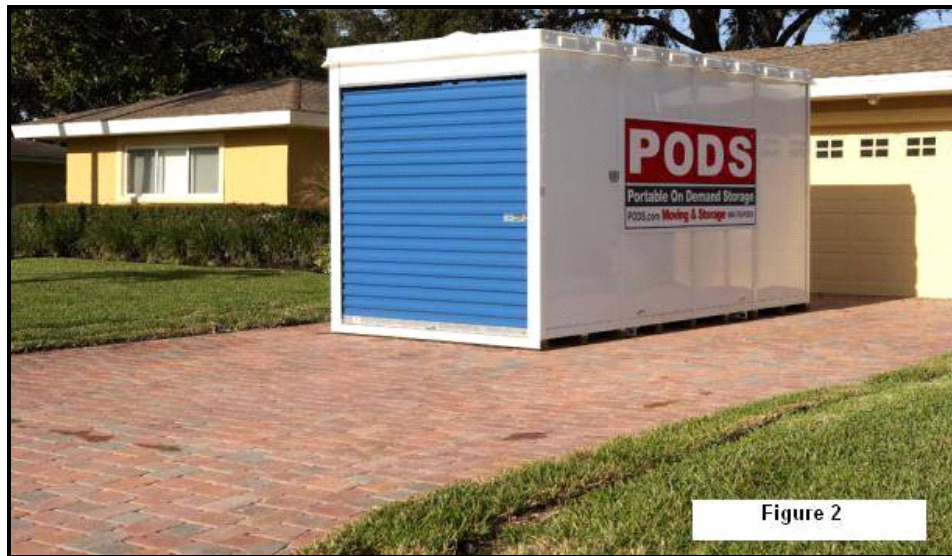


Figure 2

Other applicable definitions from UDC 35-A101:

Setback. A line within a lot parallel to and measured from a corresponding lot line, establishing the minimum required yard and governing the placement of structures and uses on the lot.

Yard. An area on a lot between the lot line and the nearest principal structure, unoccupied and unobstructed by any portion of a structure from the ground upward, except as otherwise provided in this chapter.

Determination of Setbacks and Yards

Measurement of setbacks shall be determined in accordance with Information Bulletin #515 <https://webapps1.sanantonio.gov/dsddocumentcentral/upload/IB515.pdf> Determination of yard location shall be determined in accordance with Information Bulletin # 539 <https://webapps1.sanantonio.gov/dsddocumentcentral/upload/IB539.pdf> Most single family districts have a minimum front setback of 10 feet and a required garage setback of 20 feet.

Permit Required

A permit must be obtained from Development Services for all portable storage units 120 square feet or greater in size (IBC). In addition to any permit requirements, a portable storage unit affidavit is required regardless of whether or not a permit is required. The affidavit shall be submitted to the plans and permit staff of Development Services who will attach the file to the property information. A sample affidavit is attached to this Information Bulletin. The fee for the permit is the same as that for accessory structures. Historic or Neighborhood Conservation Districts requirements shall apply at the time of permitting. The time limits below apply regardless of whether or not a permit is required.

Placement on a lot

Temporary storage units are allowed within the front yard area but behind minimum front and side building setback lines for a period of up to 60 days within any rolling 12 month period. If requested for more than 60 days in an industrial zoning district the storage unit must be placed within the side or rear yard area as an accessory use in accordance with UDC 35-370 and must be behind a minimum six foot tall privacy fence or screened in accordance with the landscape ordinance (35-511(c)(1)).

Time Limits

Temporary storage units are allowed by right in all non-industrially zoned properties for up to 60 days any rolling 12 month period per tables 311-1 and 311-2 of the UDC. Industrially zoned properties (L, I-1, I-2, MI-1 and MI-2) may have these units indefinitely subject to the provisions herein.

TABLE 311-1 RESIDENTIAL USE MATRIX																			
<i>PERMITTED USE</i>	<i>RP</i>	<i>RE</i>	<i>R-20</i>	<i>NP-15</i>	<i>NP-10</i>	<i>NP-8</i>	<i>R-6</i>	<i>RM-6</i>	<i>R-5</i>	<i>RM-5</i>	<i>R-4</i>	<i>RM-4</i>	<i>MF -18</i>	<i>MF-25</i>	<i>MF-33</i>	<i>MF-40</i>	<i>MF-50</i>	<i>ERZD</i>	<i>LBCS</i>
Storage (moving pods) – <i>up to 60 days within any 12 month period</i>	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Storage (Shipping Container)	Not permitted in residential zoning districts																		

TABLE 311-2 NON-RESIDENTIAL USE MATRIX													
	<i>PERMITTED USE</i>	O-1 & O-1.5	O-2	NC	C-1	C-2	C-3	D	L	I-1	I-2	ERZD	(LBCS)
Storage	Storage, Moving Pod – up to 60 days within any 12 month period	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S	
Storage	Storage Shipping Container - no time limit	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	P	P	P	S	

P = permitted by right, no change of zoning required
S = requires specific use authorization, a zoning change is required

Summary of Requirements

Time	Under 120 SF	Over 120 SF	Allowable Location	Required Zoning
60 days or less	No permit required	Permit required, accessory structure	Front yard, side yard, rear yard behind required min. setbacks	All zoning district
61 days or more	No permit required	Permit required, accessory structure	Side or rear yard behind privacy fence, subject to UDC 35-370	L, I-1, I-2, MI-1, and MI-2 or with “S” for a shipping container

PORTABLE STORAGE UNIT**GUIDELINES / AFFIDAVIT****San Antonio Development Services Department**

P.O. Box 839966, San Antonio, Texas 78283-3966

AP# _____

Address _____

Container Ident. # _____

Conditions of approval portable storage unit:

1. The unit shall not have any axles or wheels.
2. The unit shall not be placed in the front yard, except as temporary storage not to exceed 60 days and must be behind the minimum front and side building setback. *(Note that garages must maintain a minimum 20 foot building setback per UDC 35-515(g)).* Any usage beyond 60 days requires L, I-1, I-2, MI-1 or MI-2 zoning and placement of the unit behind a solid privacy fence in the side or rear yard area, outside of the minimum side and rear setbacks for accessory structures (UDC 35-370).
3. The unit shall not block fire lanes, vehicular access nor the clear vision area.
4. The unit shall not have any advertising on it other than the name of the container supplier and information that may be required by the state and/or federal regulations regarding permit numbers and identification.
5. If the units is placed on the paved parking area the total amount of remaining parking spaces available to the public shall not be reduced below the minimum required by section 35-526 of the UDC.
6. The unit shall not be connected to any utility and/or used as habitable/occupiable space.
7. The unit shall not be placed so as to adversely impact the health or survivability of any required tree preservation efforts, tree planting, landscaping, irrigation, buffering and/or screening mandated by the UDC. The City Arborist shall be the sole authority in determining if an adverse condition is created.
8. The unit shall not be placed in a manner that disrupts or alters drainage on the site.
9. The unit shall be considered an accessory use to a principal use and only placed on a lot that has a principal building use with a valid certificate of occupancy.
10. Stacking of portable storage units (shipping containers) shall not be allowed in any zoning district other than "I-1", "I-2", "MI-1" and "MI-2" industrial zoning districts.
11. No hazardous materials shall be stored or maintained inside of the portable storage unit.

I certify that I have read the eleven (11) provisions listed above and agree to comply fully with each provision. I acknowledge that violation of one or more provisions shall constitute a basis for revocation of the certificate of occupancy for the principal building on the site and forfeiting of the storage unit. I further acknowledge that this affidavit is not meant to relieve the property owner of any other provisions of the City of San Antonio's Municipal Code in relation to the location and use of portable storage units on the property.

Type Authorized Agents Name_____
Signature of Authorized Agent_____
Date Signed

State of Texas

County of Bexar

Before me, the undersigned authority on this day personally appeared _____ known to me to be the person whose name is signed to the foregoing affidavit and sworn by me, state under oath that all of the facts therein set forth are true and correct.

Sworn to before me, this ____ day of _____, 20____.

Notary Public in and for the State of Texas